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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 001353

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SUBJECT: KOIRALA DISTRUSTFUL OF MAOISTS AND KING

REF: NEW DELHI 04531

Classified By: Charge Elisabeth Millard. Reasons 1.4 (b/d)

Summary

1. (C) Charge found former Nepalese PM and current leader of the seven party alliance 80-year-old GP Koirala fit and spry when calling on him at his residence on June 21 after his return from a "medical" trip to India. Koirala said that there was an important role for the international community to play, noting that he distrusted both the King and the Maoists. Koirala said that recent overtures to the Maoists were both a test to gauge the true nature of the Maoist commitment to dialogue and a means to pressure the King. Charge cautioned that such an approach was dangerous and pressed for dialogue between the parties and the palace.

International Role

2. (C) Koirala stated he had the opportunity to meet with GOI officials and politicians in India (reftel) to discuss the role of the international community in Nepal. He had noted that Maoists are not only a Nepali problem, and urged India to take initiative with the international community to work toward a political solution. Koirala suggested a third party facilitator or mediator, such as the UN, would be necessary to bring all the parties together.

Arms

3. (C) Koirala mentioned he told the Indians that while it was their decision on how to supply arms to Nepal, he hoped they would consider if their actions would encourage and support democracy or autocracy. Koirala expressed the view that while the Maoists and the RNA had arms, the parties did not and could not defend themselves if attacked by either group. The Charge expressed concern about describing the Maoists and the RNA as equals, noting the RNA's *raison d'être* is largely to defend against the insurgency.

Parties Testing the Maoists

4. (C) Koirala said that he wanted to test the Maoists, so he sent a message to them. While they responded that they were flexible and had expressed interest in a face to face meeting, Koirala noted that this might be positive only on the surface. Only time would tell their true intentions. He admitted that the parties were also using their dialogue with the Maoists to pressure the King. The Charge said that such an approach was dangerous -- the Maoists were trying to deepen the divide between the parties and the palace. It was hard to understand any approach which provided the insurgents with legitimacy less than two weeks after their most deadly attack on civilians.

Parties Distrustful of the King

5. (C) Koirala said that there has been no recent communication between the seven parties and the King. The parties would wait and see if and how the King reached out to the parties once he returns to Nepal on June 22. The Charge offered the idea of using the proposed municipal elections as an opportunity to work toward democracy. Koirala acknowledged that they had discussed various options, but he reiterated the parties stand against municipal elections stating that participation would "legitimize all unconstitutional acts by the King." Koirala noted that the King had deceived the people of Nepal before by calling for multiparty elections and he could do so again. The Charge noted that the international community's eyes were on Nepal and so the current situation was different.

Future Steps

6. Koirala noted that now the parties were waiting to see

what both the King and the Maoists do. The King had to create the conditions for dialogue, and the Maoists had to show by their actions if they were sincere. Koirala mentioned that his party's convention would be in August and at that time the NC's policy would be clearly formulated.

Comment

17. (C) Post found Koirala's distrust of the Maoists reassuring, but we are still concerned that the gambit may backfire with disastrous consequences. We continue to push for dialogue between the seven parties and the King, and urge the parties not to legitimize the Maoists before they give up arms and renounce terrorism.

MILLARD